

INSTRUCTIONS FOR REPORTING Eligibility

The Application for Free or Reduced-Price Meals is to be used to collect enrollment data. The "Required Parent/Guardian Letter" must accompany the Application for Free or Reduced-Price Meals and is to be distributed to the parents of the children enrolled in your center(s). The Child and Adult Care Food Program Regulations, Section 226.2, define an enrolled child as "a child whose parent or guardian has submitted to an institution a signed document which indicates that the child is enrolled for child care."

To report enrollment you are required to use the figures from a 30-day enrollment/attendance study to compile the income information for the enrollment categories for the fiscal year. Use the attached roster to record the names of the children who attended during the 30-day study period. The income category for each enrolled child in attendance during the study must be considered, whether the child participated regularly or only for one day. Enrolled children whose parents did not return a Free and Reduced-Price Application must be included on the roster and put in the "paid" category. The Application **must** include the information outlined in the attached Question and Answer Guide about the 30-day Enrollment/Attendance Study. Enrolled children with an incomplete Application for Free or Reduced-Price Meals must be put in the "paid" category.

You will report the numbers in each claiming category (free, reduced-price, paid) when you submit your roster. The total number of children on your roster should be the same as the total number of enrolled children in attendance during the study period. The enrollment data you report will provide the basis for your reimbursement for the entire fiscal year unless you update it during the year. A copy of the roster, Applications for Free or Reduced-Price Meals, and attendance records for the 30-day study must be maintained in your files.

CHECKLIST OF FORMS TO BE FILED TO SUPPORT THE 30-DAY ENROLLMENT/ATTENDANCE STUDY

- ☐ Applications for Free and Reduced Price Meals for all children on the enrollment roster included in the free or reduced price-claiming category.
- ☐ Attendance forms for the 30-day period of the study. Forms must be legible, include first and last names of enrolled children, and arrival and departure times are strongly recommended.
- ☐ Enrollment Roster page(s). Roster must be legible and include first and last names of enrolled children.
- ☐ Enrollment forms to verify children are enrolled for care must be readily available.
- ☐ Enrollment forms must include the effective date of enrollment.

CHECKLIST OF FORMS TO BE READ AND STUDIED BY THE PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE FOR COMPLETING ANY PORTION OF THE 30-DAY ENROLLMENT/ATTENDANCE STUDY

- ☐ Current Income Eligibility Guidelines ☐ Current Application for Free or Reduced Price Meals
- ☐ Current Required Parent/Guardian Letter ☐ Instructions for Reporting Enrollment
- ☐ Checklist (3) for Approving Free or Reduced Price Meals

☐ Child and Adult Care Food Program for Free or Reduced Price Meal Requirements

☐ Questions and Answers About the 30-Day Enrollment/Attendance Study

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE 30-DAY

ENROLLMENT/ATTENDANCE STUDY

1. Q. How is a Blended Reimbursement rate determined?
A. The Blended rate determination is based on a 30-day study of a sponsor's enrollment, attendance and number of children qualified as free, reduced-price or paid based on completed *Application for Free or Reduced-Price Meals*. An *Application for Free or Reduced-Price Meals* is not required for "paid" children.
2. Q. How is the study completed?
A. All children enrolled in a center(s) who were in attendance for one or more days during the 30-day study are listed on the Enrollment Roster provided by the State Office. Indicate if the child is qualified as free, reduced-price or paid based on a completed, approved current *Application for Free or Reduced-Price Meals*. See the "Instructions for Reporting Enrollment" form for additional instructions.
3. Q. Why is the date the application was signed by the parent or guardian important?
A. At least annually (at Agreement renewal time), each sponsor must report the number of enrolled children whose family income falls within certain ranges called the "Income Eligibility Guidelines." Each year these "guidelines" change, because they are based on the cost of living. The date the application was signed helps ensure current Income Eligibility Guidelines or Family Size and Income Guidelines are used. Guidelines are effective for a one-year period: July 1 - June 30. The *Application for Free or Reduced- Price Meals* cannot be signed earlier than July 1 to be valid.

The *Application for Free or Reduced-Price Meals* must be signed and dated within 90 days of the beginning date of the enrollment/attendance study to ensure complete and accurate data is available. The *Application for Free or Reduced-Price Meals* cannot be signed after the ending date of the enrollment/attendance study. For instance, for a sponsor who is completing the study in October, only *Application for Free or Reduced-Price Meals* signed during July, August, September and October for children in attendance in October may be included in the study in the free and reduced-price categories. At agreement renewal, applications signed prior to the 90-day period of time must be counted in the "paid" category. The 90-day period of time does not apply to children continuously enrolled when a new revised enrollment/attendance study is conducted in the same fiscal year.
4. Q. I have two or more free/reduced priced meal applications on file for one or more children. All of these applications were completed within the 90-day period immediately preceding the first day of the 30-day enrollment/attendance study. Which application do I use?
A. Federal Regulations require that eligibility be based on "current family size and income verification". Therefore the most recently completed application must be used in determining eligibility for the purposes of the 30-day enrollment/attendance study.

For example, a sponsor is using October for the study month. However, they have two or more applications dated in July, August, September and/or October which were completed by the parents. In this example, the parent completed at least one and often four applications. The sponsor must use the most recently completed application (usually October in this example) in conducting the study.

The State Office does not recommend this procedure. It is an unnecessary, time consuming burden for both parents and sponsor's staff to request that parents complete monthly *Free or Reduced Price Meal Applications*.

If an income of zero dollars is reported on the application, the application is approved for 45 days temporarily and the sponsor must verify that this is still the current income level of the family/household prior to reporting eligibility on the enrollment roster. The sponsor must document on the applicable Free or Reduced Price Application, that verification was conducted and the results of that verification.

5. Q. How is the actual Blended Reimbursement Rate calculated?
- A. The rate is based on the percentage of free, reduced-price and paid enrolled children to the total number reported on the Enrollment Roster. This is calculated by the State Office upon receipt of your enrollment rosters for the 30-day enrollment/attendance study.
6. Q. If a Child is in attendance for only one day, is he/she included on the Enrollment Roster?
- A. Yes. **ALL** children in attendance, whether for only one day, or on a regular basis, must be included on the Enrollment Roster. Remember, each child must also have a completed enrollment form. Children in attendance who did not have a reimbursed meal and/or snack should not be included on the enrollment/attendance study.
7. Q. Are sponsor's employee's children or grandchildren included on the Enrollment Roster? What kind of documentation is needed?
- A. For purposes of the 30-day enrollment/attendance study, an employee's children or grandchildren are to be treated no differently than other children. If the employee's children/grandchildren are served meals/snacks and included in the reimbursable meal count on the *Blended Rate Meal Count Sheet* they must be: [1] enrolled for care (see *Instructions for Reporting Enrollment*); [2] included in all attendance records; [3] an *Application for Free or Reduced-Price Meals* must be completed, reviewed and approved or disapproved or the child(ren) included in the "paid" category (see Checklist for *Approving Applications for Free or Reduced-Price Meals*)

Please note: A parent who submits an *Application for Free or Reduced-Price Meals* cannot also approve that application. Another approving official, a member of the Board of Directors must review and approve or deny this application. The member of the board **must not** be related to the parent completing the application. Contact the State Office if more guidance is required in this area.

8. Q. How often does the Blended Reimbursement Rate need to be computed?
- A. It needs to be computed once a year. The Blended Reimbursement Rate calculated as part of the agreement renewal each year can be used during the entire fiscal year. However, the Blended Rate can be revised as desired during the fiscal year. Please see Question #11 for more information.
9. Q. How do I revise the Blended Reimbursement Rate for my center(s)?
- A. Another 30-day study must be conducted. The Enrollment Roster must be updated as part of the study. This is done by "crossing out" (drawing a line through) the names of children who are no longer enrolled and in attendance for at least one day during the new test month. The names of "new" children should be added to the Roster. Remember, you must use the same accuracy in completing all Enrollment/Attendance studies. The revised Enrollment Rosters must be submitted to the State Office.
10. Q. Do *Applications for Free or Reduced-Price Meals* need to be obtained for children enrolling after the 30-day study is completed?
- A. Yes, *Applications for Free or Reduced-Price Meals* must be collected from each enrolled child.
11. Q. Is a revised 30-day study ever required?

- A. A revised study must be completed if there is a significant change in enrollment, increasing or decreasing 20%; or, for example, this might happen if a site is added or closed.

12. Q. How will the 30-day enrollment/attendance study and Blended Reimbursement Rate be reviewed during an administrative review conducted by the State Office?

A. During an administrative review the 30-day study will be thoroughly checked.

All applications for children reported as qualified for free or reduced-price on the roster will be reviewed. These applications must be complete and accurate. Remember, a complete, accurate and current application must be on file for each child indicated as free or reduced-price on the roster.

Attendance records will be compared to the Enrollment Roster and the Enrollment roster will be compared to attendance records. All children in attendance at least one day during the month must be included on the roster. Children not in attendance at least one day during the 30-day study should not be included.

Accuracy in conducting the 30-day enrollment/attendance study is very important to avoid claim exceptions against a Sponsor. It is strongly recommended a separate file be maintained for each 30-day study conducted. This file should include the: (1) Enrollment Roster; (2) Applications for Free or Reduced-Price Meals for children listed on the roster; and, (3) attendance records for the month. *Applications for Free or Reduced-Price Meals* for children not included in the 30-day study should be filed separately.